

## GONE INTO HEAVEN.

I ST. PETER iii. 22.

"Oh, think what a joy it is to know some one in heaven!" said a dear old woman to me the other day. She was speaking of her good husband, who had been called away to his rest some years previously.

Now of course her husband was not in Heaven, but Paradise, waiting with all the souls of the faithful the call of the King. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,"—after which sentence they will enter "into life eternal" in heaven. But I knew what she meant; and though at the time I only answered, "Yes, Betty, it is a great help to us to think often of those who are gone before," her words came back to me again and again. I thought—Yes, indeed, besides the dear ones in Paradise we do all of us know some one in heaven—Some One, Whom it is a joy to know, standing there in the very presence of God—Some One, Who though He is in heaven, is thinking, always thinking of us, of each one of us here on earth.

For He was here on earth once; and He knows all our joys and sorrows, all our trials and crosses. He "is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for He was in all points tempted like as we are." Now He is in heaven at the right hand of God.

Yes! we know Him, we know about Him, we can read how He was a little child at Nazareth "subject" to Joseph and His Mother, how He "went about doing good," how He laid down His life for us that we might

• • • come at last to heaven  
Saved by His Precious Blood.

Now He is in heaven! What is He doing there? We read again, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

Surely, then, if it is a help to us to think often of some relation or friend who has passed into Paradise, leaving us a "good example" which we are striving to follow; much more must it be a help to us to think of our great Intercessor even now pleading for us, even now thinking of us, yearning for us. Oh! how far above us does He seem as we try faintly to picture that scene; but yet we know Him. Oh! yes, we know Him. Oh! yes, we know Him quite well; and as we recognize Him our hearts go out to Him. We feel that "it is indeed a joy to us to know Some One in Heaven!"

## A BRAVE SOLDIER SPOILED.

It is storied of Antigonus, that seeing a soldier in his camp of so daring a courage that he always courted the most hazardous attempts, and observing him also of infirm and sickly habit, he took a particular care of him, and by medicine and good attendance recovered him; which no sooner he had done, but the man grew more cautious, and would no longer expose himself as formerly; and gave this reason for it, that now he was healthy his life was of some value to him, and not to be hazarded at the same rate, as when it was only a burden. And should God cure all our complaints, and render us perfectly at ease, I fear too many of us would be of the soldier's mind, think our lives too good to resign to Him, much more to hazard for Him, as Christianity in many cases obliges us. The truth is that we do so passionately dote upon the world, that like besotted lovers, we can bear a great deal of ill usage before we quit our pursuit.

## A SHIP IN A STORM.

"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers. The countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil: to root out the remembrance of them from the earth."—Psalm xxxiv. 15, 16.

LET me tell you an old tale of a ship in a storm at sea. Some of those in the ship went to pray to their false gods to help them. They were men who did not care to pray or to do good. It was fear that made them think of it. One man, more wise and good than they, told them not to make a noise, and to be still; "For," said he, "if the gods hear that there are such bad men in the ship, they will drown us all."

I wish some who think they hold the true faith would take heed to my tale. They sin all their lives, and care not to pray to their God. But in times of need they are loud in their cries; then they pray, and think that God will hear all they say. Let such men take care how they pray. If they cry out in fear of death, and do not wish to get free from the sin that brings death and woe, how can they look for aid from God? Bad men who pray and do not seek to be good, tell God how bad they are, and call on Him to drown them all. But one who grieves for his sin, and tries by God's grace to do right, will get more than he asks. God will save him from the waves of this bad world, and will bring him in peace to the shore.

## HOLY JESUS.

Who camest down from heaven, and wast pleased to pay that dear Ransom on the Cross for us, that Thou mightest redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Thyself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; I beseech Thee to write Thy law in my heart, that I may see and do it; that I may know Thee, and the power of The Resurrection, and express it in turning from all mine iniquities.—Hammond.

## UNKNOWN SUFFERINGS.

JESUS CHRIST came upon the earth to suffer. He began by taking a body similar to our sinful body; and who amongst us can conceive all the self-denial, the humiliation, the sacrifice, that the Lord of glory, the Prince of life underwent in lowering Himself to the misery of our poor nature, and taking upon Him all its degradations even to the tomb! "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." And here observe that what distinguishes the sufferings of Christ from ours is that they were voluntary. Nothing obliged Him to it. And we can no more conceive of His sufferings than we can conceive what God and the Infinite are.—Adolphe Monod.

## MY LIBERTY.

God made us, and not we ourselves; we are His, and not our own. We are not free to act as we like; we are bound to do as God likes. Moreover, we do not know what is for our good. We care as thinking beings, for our own welfare when we take the way God points out. He knows what is best for us, and He wishes our happiness. Many people seem quite to forget this. They act as if they did something over and above their duty, and took some new step in giving up their right over themselves, by making a profession of religion, or owning God's claim upon them.

A young woman, whose Baptism had been neglected, was being prepared by the clergyman of the parish. One day he called at her mother's house to ask why she had not come to the class. The answer was "I don't think she will come again. We think it is rather soon for her to give up her liberty by making those promises."

No words could show more ignorance of what man's place is before the God to whom he owes life and all things. What those who come to Holy Baptism have to declare is that they in their hearts wish not to follow or be led astray by the temptations of the world, the devil, or their own sinful nature; that they believe the truths God makes known; and that they mean to try with God's help to make God's will and laws their rule of life. Has anyone "liberty" to go where sin tempts; to turn a deaf, or careless, or unbelieving to God's words; to defy God's commandments? Does anyone give up "liberty" by choosing to live godly? All are bound to faith and obedience from the mere fact that they belong to God, and live in a world where all they use belongs to God. The change when they are baptised is that they disown the service of sin, and can claim a heavenly Father's blessing and help, while they do as His adopted children what they were already bound to do as His creatures.

The same mistake is often made about coming to Confirmation and Communion. Confirmation lays no new responsibility on any, except for the right use of the new grace God gives to those who faithfully seek it. No one would wish to grow up with only a child's strength, lest the work of a man should be looked for from him. So it is sin and folly to shrink from seeking God's confirming grace, in hopes that God will expect less. God will ask an account of gifts that we refuse to take, as well as of those who fail to use when we have got them. To come to Confirmation is not to say that we are strong, and so are able to undertake great things. It is to own how weak we are to do what we cannot escape being bound to do; it is to seek power from Him who will judge us. Honesty is owning debt and meaning to pay; it is all that is needed.

So with the Holy Communion. Those who pray at all are bound to all those things which God looks for all in communicants. Man can do no more than strive against sin that he grieves for; look up with faith to God, the Revealer of truth, the Giver of grace; and show love to God and man. No one is at "liberty" to do less. Nor is any one free to refuse the close oneness with Christ given in the Holy Communion to strengthen and refresh souls.

None have "liberty" but those who are free from sin, and under God's care. None are in this state but those who in heaven's appointed ways claim their place as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. They love the commandments of the Father whom they love and whose love they trust. So they "walk at liberty."

## GOD'S GENTLENESS.

What is the dew upon the flower, but God's gentle nurturing of the most delicate and refined result of vegetation? What is the falling rain, but gentle drops of heaven's love, distilling verdure upon the earth, and feeding the ear of corn to provide bread for man? Above all, what is light; penetrating, invigorating light—light, making the birds to sing with glee; light, making the beast of the field to bask in its warmth; light, making the insects happy and the eagle to fix his gaze; light, unmeasured light, tree to the slave, wealth to the pauper? It is the gentle beam of love kindled in the eye of God, and looking tenderness and care upon all created things. Yes, we are encompassed with the gentleness of God, fructifying the earth, urging her onward to fresh beauty and renewed fertility.

## RIGHT AND WRONG.

ST. AUGUSTINE speaks thus of his good mother:—"She was startled with an holy fear and trembling; and though I was not as yet baptized, feared for me those crooked ways, in which they walk, who turn their back to Thee, and not their face." The allusion is to Jeremiah ii. 27.

Here is the right view of Church privileges. We do well to consider it, and to avoid the wrong view which so many people hold.

*The Wrong View.* What more common than the notion that those who believe in God's blessing of Holy Baptism are encouraged to lead careless lives? It is thought that they need not be anxious about their souls. Having been taught that they are by Holy Baptism in "a state of salvation," they are supposed to rest content with this. Indeed, some people go farther. They think that baptized members of the Church believe themselves so safe that their sins do them no harm, and that God will treat them as His children, no matter how ungodly they become. But this is all untrue and all wrong.

*The Right View.* St. Augustine knew it, and he teaches us what it is. He speaks of his mother's fear and trembling for him, "though" he was not baptized. By this he says plainly that, after he was baptized she had more reason to fear. And in this statement he shows his knowledge of the truth. Yes, the more we have the more we owe. The greater blessings we receive, the greater is the fear of losing them. The more we think of our baptismal grace, the more we should dread the sins that take it away.

Hence the need of telling people all the truth about their place in the Church of God. If you are baptized you are a "member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." And each of these thoughts should lead you to fear and to carefulness. Members of Christ must not defile themselves. Children of God must not be disobedient. Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven must not sell their birthright. Every blessing is a danger. The best makes us fear the most. The higher we rise, the lower we may fall. God careth for you. But you must take care and be watchful.

## THE COLD RIVER.

AN Alpine hunter on Mount Blanc, passing the Mer de Glace, lost his hold and slipped into one of those frightful crevices by which the sea of ice is cleft to its foundations. By catching in his swift descent against the points of rocks and projections of ice, he broke his fall, so that he reached the bottom alive, but only to face death in a more terrible form. On either hand the icy walls rose, above which he saw only a strip of blue sky. At his feet trickled a little brook, formed from the slowly melting glacier. There was but one possible chance of escape—to follow this rivulet which might lead to some passage. In silence and fear he picked his way, down, down, till his further advance was stopped by a cliff that rose up before him, while the stream rolled darkly below. He heard the roaring of the waters which seemed to wait for him. What should he do? Death was beside him and behind him. There was no time for delay. He paused but an instant, and plunged into the stream. One moment of breathless suspense—a sense of darkness and coldness, and yet of swift motion, as if he were gliding through the shades below—and then a light began to glimmer faintly in the waters, and the next instant he was amid the green fields and the flowers and the summer sunshine of the vale of Chamouni.

So it is when Christians die. They come to the bank of the river, and it is cold and dark. Nature shrinks from the fatal plunge. Yet one chilling moment and all fear is left behind, and the Christian is amid the fields of the paradise of God.

No man ever did a designed injury to another, without doing a greater to himself.